FADE IN:

Black.

A faint **electrical hum**.

Then—

AN OLD TELEVISION CLICKS ON.

Snow. Static.
The glow fills a dim, **warmly lit living room** — amber lamps, wood-paneled walls, lace curtains gently stirring.

A **family gathers**.

Children collapse onto the carpet, legs crossed, laughing.
Parents settle into the couch, tired but content.
Someone passes popcorn.
Someone shushes, smiling.

This is safety.
This is routine.
This is *home*.

The TV picture stabilizes — a cheerful program intro begins—

—

SCREEECH.

The image **warps**.

The sound **drops out**.

A sharp emergency tone cuts through the room.

The laughter dies instantly.

No one moves.

On the TV:
A still photograph of a **six-year-old boy**.

Too still.
Too quiet.

The reporter speaks — calm, rehearsed… but strained beneath the surface.

REPORTER (TV)
"We interrupt this program with breaking news. Earlier today, six-year-old **Eddy Morris** was reported missing."

The parents lean forward.

One child grips their sibling's arm.

REPORTER (TV)
"According to authorities, Eddy was last seen leaving for summer camp this morning. He never arrived."

A pause.

REPORTER (TV)
"Police say there are currently no leads."

The camera lingers on the boy's photo **just a second too long**.

REPORTER (TV)
"Parents are urged to keep their children close… and remain alert."

The emergency tone returns.

The TV **CLICKS OFF**.

The room stays silent.

No one speaks.

CUT TO:

MORNING.

A **kitchen**, sun pouring in.

A man tightens his tie. Coffee brews.

A radio hums softly.

Normalcy.

Then—

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
"New developments in the search for Eddy Morris."

The man stops moving.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
"Police now believe the child was abducted from his neighborhood."

The word *abducted* hangs in the air.

The coffee pot clicks off.

CUT TO:

A WOMAN DRIVING.

Hands on the wheel. Kids' drawings taped to the dashboard.

The radio crackles.

RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
"Tensions rise today after a second child disappearance."

Her grip tightens.

RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
"Eight-year-old **Katy Harmon** vanished during school hours. Authorities are investigating staff and security footage."

The woman glances in the rearview mirror.

As if expecting someone to be there.

CUT TO:

A DIFFERENT HOUSE. DIFFERENT TV.

REPORTER (TV)
"Police now believe these disappearances may be connected."

CUT TO:

A DIFFERENT RADIO. DIFFERENT LOCATION.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
“Parents are advised to take extreme protective measures.”

CUT TO:

TV STATIC — THEN:

REPORTER (TV)
“Jeremy Fritz, age seven, has been reported missing.”

CUT TO:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
“Authorities confirm an intruder entered a school auditorium during late hours.”

CUT TO:

The pacing **tightens**.

The cuts come faster.

The sound design begins to overlap.

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
“Eddy Morris—”

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
“—found deceased—”

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
“—in a sewer system—”

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
“—out of state—”

Silence.

Then—

REPORTER (TV)
"Police describe the suspect vehicle as a 1960s Chevy Bel Air."

CUT TO:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
"Eight-year-old Mary Bradshaw—"

CUT TO:

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
"Authorities are actively hunting the intruder."

CUT TO:

TV VOICE
"A statewide curfew has been implemented."

CUT TO:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
"Another child found dead—"

CUT TO:

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
"Eyewitnesses describe a man—"

A beat.

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
"—approximately seven feet tall."

A breath.

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
"Dressed up… as a rabbit"

NOW THE MONTAGE COLLAPSES IN ON ITSELF.

Screens. Radios. TVs. Car stereos. Store displays.

All cutting faster.

Layering.

Overlapping.

Distorting.

"Two children found dead across state lines—"
"Three more missing—"
"Parents fleeing their homes—"
"Neighboring states enforce curfews—"
"Bodies discovered in Texas—"
"Reports of a man in a bunny costume abducting children—"
"Five-year-old Terry Nomes—"
"Massachusetts population drops as fear spreads—"
"Four new cases reported—"

The sound becomes **overwhelming**.

Then—

EVERY DEVICE. EVERY VOICE.

In **perfect sync**:

ALL VOICES
"Police and the public have begun referring to the suspect dressed in a rabbit costume, as—"

A pause.

A breath.

ALL VOICES
"**The Hurricane Slasher.**"

NEWSPAPERS ERUPT ACROSS THE SCREEN.

Headlines fly. Spin. Tear.

“HURRICANE SLASHER ON THE MOVE”
“SCHOOLS CLOSED IN SEVEN COUNTIES”
“WHO IS THE HURRICANE SLASHER?”
“A PHENOMENON OF FEAR”
“NOTHING STRIKES TERROR INTO AMERICA LIKE THE HURRICANE SLASHER”

CUT TO:
A police station bulletin board.
Charcoal sketches slapped up hastily.

A tall, distorted figure.
Long ears.
A hollow, smiling mask.

REPORTER (TV)
“Police have released preliminary sketches of the suspect—”

REPORTER (TV)
“—described by witnesses as a tall male wearing what appears to be a rabbit costume.”

A beat.

REPORTER (TV)
“Authorities warn the public these images are only approximations.”

The sketch lingers.

REPORTER (TV)
“But investigators believe the suspect is responsible for over 45 confirmed murders.”

CUT TO:
A TV panel. Blurred faces. Talking heads.

NEWS COMMENTATOR (TV)
“What’s disturbing is how quickly the image has spread.”

NEWS COMMENTATOR (TV)
"The so-called 'Rabbit Man' has already become recognizable… even iconic."

Another voice cuts in.

PSYCHOLOGIST (TV)
"When a killer adopts a costume, it stops being about concealment."

PSYCHOLOGIST (TV)
"It becomes about control. About being remembered."

A pause.

PSYCHOLOGIST (TV)
"He's not hiding."

PSYCHOLOGIST (TV)
"He's performing."

CUT TO:
A radio talk show.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
"Online forums have begun circulating fan art and theories about the Hurricane Slasher."

A caller cuts in, slightly distorted.

CALLER (V.O.)
"I mean… no one's ever done anything like this before."

An uneasy laugh.

CALLER (V.O.)
"It's kinda— I dunno— bold."

The host hesitates.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
"We do want to remind listeners that children are—"

The caller interrupts.

CALLER (V.O.)
"Yeah, yeah. Obviously that's horrible."

A beat.

CALLER (V.O.)
"But you can't deny… he's gonna go down in history."

CUT TO:
A somber news desk.

ANCHOR (TV)
"Criminal analysts are already calling this case unprecedented."

ANCHOR (TV)
"The Hurricane Slasher is now being compared to the most infamous killers in modern history."

Another voice overlays.

CRIME ANALYST (V.O.)
"This isn't just a man committing crimes."

CRIME ANALYST (V.O.)
"This is a figure being constructed in real time."

CRIME ANALYST (V.O.)
"By the media. By the public."

CRIME ANALYST (V.O.)
"By fear itself."

Another voice overlays.

NEWS VOICE (V.O.)
"The Hurricane Slasher is rapidly becoming one of the most infamous criminals in American history—"

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
"—a name now recognized nationwide—"

TV VOICE
"—a symbol of terror—"

DISTORTED VOICE
"—a legend—"

Then—

ALL DEVICES, IN SYNC

ALL VOICES
“The Hurricane Slasher.”

Devices scream now.

Faster.

Louder.

More distorted.

“HURRICANE SLASHER—”
“HURRICANE SLASHER—”
“HURRICANE SLASHER—”

It becomes noise.

A chant.

A curse.

Flashed and blurry images of the killer flicker on screen

Then—

TOTAL SILENCE.

Black.

Then a newspaper slams down. A picture of a young girl, bruised, beaten.

Soft.

Almost reverent.

“Victoria Lennard.”

A beat.

“The girl who lived.”

CUT TO BLACK

BLACK.

Silence.

Not peaceful.
Heavy. Like the air before a storm.

INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Victoria lies still in bed.

For a brief moment, she looks almost peaceful.
Like someone pretending to be okay.

Then—

She **SNAPS AWAKE.**

A sharp, broken **GASP** rips from her chest.

She screams—not loud, not dramatic—but **raw**, like the sound tears itself out of her. Tears are already streaming, as if her body knew before she did.

She claws at the sheets, scrambling backward, eyes wild—
like she's trying to escape something that's still *there*.

Her breathing fractures. She can't find air.

DAVID jolts awake beside her.

No hesitation.

He wraps his arms around her, tight—protective—like if he lets go, she might disappear.

She fights it at first. Her body's still in survival mode.

DAVID
(soft, urgent)
Hey—hey—, it's okay. You're here. I've got you. You're safe.

She collapses into him.

Her strength drains all at once.

She sobs into his chest—not pretty crying, not cinematic—just **exhausted**, gut-deep grief finally spilling over.

David holds her like this is not the first time.
Like he knows exactly how long to wait before speaking again.

KEYHOLE POV — HALLWAY

A narrow, distorted view.

Victoria sits on the edge of the bed now, face buried in her hands. Her shoulders shake as she tries—fails—to steady herself.

David kneels in front of her, murmuring things we can't hear.

This is private.
We shouldn't be watching.

REVERSE — CHILD'S POV THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

Smaller. Lower.

A child's eye fills the frame.

Watching.

Not crying.

Not moving.

Just absorbing something they don't fully understand—but will **never forget**.

HARD CUT TO:

A Journal full of primitive writing — MORNING

A writing journal

Endless words,

INT. KITCHEN — MORNING

The **sizzle of eggs** on a pan.

Too loud in the quiet.

Sunlight pushes weakly through the window, dust floating in the air.

GABBY sits at the table, hunched over, writing, like its the only thing she knows how to do. She presses the pencil too hard, the words become sketchier.

DAVID stands at the stove.

He looks tired—but he's trying not to show it.

There's a long silence.

The kind that isn't empty.
The kind that's full of everything no one wants to say.

David glances back at Gabby.

For a moment, he smiles. It's forced. But it's kind.

DAVID
Have you taken your medicine already?

GABBY
No

David opens the top cabinet, looks for her medication,

but he notices something,

he notices Victoria's pills are gone.

A feeling of dread enteres him

DAVID
did you take moms pills

Gabby hesitates,

GABBY
I thought she quit for real this time

David feels a rush of dissipation ment, but tries to change the subject

DAVID
Uhh- Did you… sleep okay last night?

Silence.

The eggs pop in the pan.

Gabby doesn’t look up.

GABBY
Yeah.
(beat)
Good.

David’s smile falters.

He realizes what he just asked.

He swallows, thinking.

DAVID
Right.
I—uh… what are you drawing?

Gabby finally looks up at him.

Her eyes are sharp. Too aware.

GABBY
Im not drawing… I'm writing.

David turns,

DAVID
Your writing?.
What are you writing about?

.Gabby keeps her eyes on the table.

Her fingers worry the edge of the paper.
She doesn’t look at David.

GABBY
(quiet)
I love Mom.

David freezes.

He nods once. Slow. Careful.

DAVID
Yeah.
(soft)
Me too.

A beat.

Gabby's voice is still gentle — but something sharper sits underneath it.

GABBY
Then why has nothing changed?

David doesn't hesitate. He was ready for this.

DAVID
Things don't change overnight.
I'm trying, Gabby. I really am.

GABBY
You say that a lot.

DAVID
Because it's true.

GABBY
Is it?

David turns to face her fully now.

DAVID
I get up every day.
I make breakfast.
I keep things normal for you.

Gabby finally looks at him.

Her eyes aren't angry yet.

They're disappointed.

GABBY
Normal for *who*?

David swallows.

DAVID
For you.

GABBY
Mom doesn’t eat anymore, all she does is drink till she passes out
She doesn’t sleep because she’s too busy taking pill.
And when she not, She stares at walls like they’re louder than we are.

David stiffens.

DAVID
She’s sick.

GABBY
Shes been sick for far too long.

That lands.

David takes a breath — slower this time.

DAVID
I’m holding this family together the only way I know how.

GABBY
By acting like it’s already broken?

David’s jaw tightens.

DAVID
Watch it.

Gabby looks away again.

Her voice drops — controlled, but trembling.

GABBY
If you really loved her…
you’d be scared.

Silence.

David straightens. The conversation ends **because he ends it**.

DAVID
Finish your drawing.
Your mom’ll be out soon.

Gabby doesn’t answer.

But her pencil presses harder than before.

Too hard.

The anger is still there.
Just waiting.

HOLD ON THE TABLE.

The eggs steam.

The drawing sits beside them.

An eye watching.

INT. BEDROOM — DAWN

Dark.
Cold.
Airless.

An **ALARM CLOCK** erupts.

Sharp. Relentless.

Victoria is already awake.

Her eyes stare upward—unblinking, hollow.
Not tired.
Spent.

She doesn't move.

It feels like she has sunk into the mattress over years, not hours. Like gravity finally won.

Her face carries a question she's asked too many times:
How much longer can I survive myself?

The alarm keeps screaming.

Victoria inhales.

Holds it.

Doesn't exhale.

The camera drifts downward—

The sheets **SHIFT**.

And then the truth is revealed.

No lower legs.

Just smooth, deliberate coverings where something *should* be.

No dramatization.
No music sting.
Just fact.

Victoria pulls herself upright and transfers into her wheelchair with practiced precision. Efficient. Emotionless.

She does not turn off the alarm.

It keeps ringing.

The sound fills the room, aggressive, invasive—
yet Victoria reacts like she can't even hear it anymore.

Despair clings to her like a second skin.

She wheels to the closet, retrieves her prosthetics, and locks them into place with mechanical clicks that feel too loud in the quiet.

She stands.

Wobbles.

Catches herself.

She dresses—not in something soft, not something human.

A **POLICE UNIFORM**.

Armor.

She fastens the badge last—hands shaking just enough to notice.

Her eyes drift to the open drawer.

Her service weapon rests inside.

A long beat.

The alarm still screams.

She takes the gun.

Holds it.

Not threatening.
Not afraid.

Just… heavy.

She tucks it into her coat

Closes the drawer.

At the door, she exhales for the first time.

Then—

She **forces a smile** onto her face.

It doesn’t reach her eyes.

She opens the door.

INT. KITCHEN — MORNING

Warm light.

False comfort.

DAVID sits with gabby, talking,.

GABBY sits at the table, legs swinging slightly. Hopeful. Watching the doorway.

Victoria enters.

Gabby lights up.

GABBY
Mom!

Victoria’s smile widens—almost convincing.

VICTORIA
Happy birthday, big girl.

They hug.

Gabby clings a second longer than usual.

Victoria closes her eyes through it.

David sets a plate in front of her.

DAVID
Figured you'd want them the same way.

Victoria nods.

VICTORIA
Thank you.

They sit.

A fragile peace.

VICTORIA
So… today's the big day.
Four o'clock.
Music. Cake… Am i forgetting somthing

Gabby smiles.

GABBY
I picked the balloons this time.
I thought about picking the sad ones.

Victoria caught off guard,

lets out a breath—almost a laugh.

VICTORIA
Good.
Help brighten up the mood.

David chuckles gently, relieved.

DAVID
Yep, This year's different.

Victoria begins eating

Victoria's fork pauses mid-air.

Her hand begins to **shake**.

David sees it immediately.

DAVID
Hey—Gabby, did you finish your thank-you cards?

GABBY
Almost.
(turns to Victoria)
Mom… do you think people will stay the whole time?

VICTORIA
Probably.

GABBY
Even if it gets… quiet?

Victoria hesitates.

VICTORIA
People don't mind quiet.

GABBY
(innocent)
Do you?

Victoria's answers shorten.

VICTORIA
No.

GABBY
Do you ever get tired of being at peoples parties?

VICTORIA
n-no.

GABBY
Is that why you leave early?... just to go to work

Victoria stops eating.

Silence.

David steps in.

DAVID
Alright—birthday rule—no interrogation before noon.

Gabby frowns.

She looks at her plate. Then—

GABBY
Daddy said you're a psycho bitch.

The words hit the room like a gunshot.

David freezes.

DAVID
Gabby—no—no—

GABBY
Daddy says you dont cry anymore because you don't care about anyone.

Victoria doesn't react.

She doesn't blink.

GABBY
Daddy says the reason he keeps a gun in his drawer
is so you don't strangle us in our sleep.

DAVID
That is NOT what I said—

GABBY
Daddy says your not the women he thought he married

David slams his hand on the table.

DAVID
STOP.

Gabby's eyes burn.

GABBY
Daddy says when he looks at you
He sees a killer,

David can't breathe.

Victoria finally looks up.

Not angry.

Wounded.

GABBY
(voice breaking)
Daddy says he’s scared of you.

A beat.

Then the final blow—

GABBY
And I think…
I think he’s right.

Tears spill down her face.

The room collapses inward.

Victoria stands slowly.

Her chair scrapes the floor.

She says nothing.

She walks past them.

INT. BEDROOM — CONTINUOUS

The **ALARM CLOCK** is still going.

Screaming.

Victoria enters, closes the door, and sinks to the floor.

She lies there.

Uniform creased.
Badge crooked.

A cop.
A mother.
A stranger.

The alarm keeps ringing.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DINING ROOM — CONTINUOUS

The room is wrecked — not physically, but emotionally.

Gabby sits stiff in her chair, tears pooled but unshed. Her jaw is locked.
David stands near the counter, both hands buried in his face.

No one speaks.

The silence stretches until it becomes painful.

DAVID
(quiet, defeated)
Go get dressed.

Gabby doesn't move.

A tear finally slips free.

David's composure snaps — not in rage, but exhaustion.

DAVID
NOW.

Gabby jerks to her feet.

She grabs her journal and **hurls it across the room**. It smacks the wall and falls open, pages exposed like a wound.

She storms down the hall and slams her door.

David doesn't follow.

He doesn't yell.

He just stands there, breathing hard — desperate for quiet.

And then…

The quiet comes.

It's worse.

SPLIT MOMENT — THREE STATES OF COLLAPSE

VICTORIA
In the dark bedroom, sitting on the edge of the bed. Still in uniform. Shoulders slumped. Not crying. Too empty for that.

DAVID
In the kitchen. He grabs a plate — then **hurls it** at the balcony door.
Glass fractures. The sound is sharp, violent, final.

He stares at the crack like he's done something irreversible.

GABBY
In her room. Pacing. Breathing fast. Hands clenched. Anger boiling with nowhere to go.

A LOUD KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR.

All three freeze.

Reality slams back in.

David straightens immediately — panic replacing anger. He rushes to the door, face already rearranging itself.

He opens it.

Two PARENTS stand there with Gabby's FRIEND.

PARENT
Everything alright in there?

David doesn't blink.

DAVID
Yeah—yeah, sorry. Dropped a plate.

PARENT
I heard yelling.

DAVID
(flustered)
I—I got mad at the dog.

A beat.

PARENT
You have a dog?

DAVID
Yeah.
(too quick)
Just a puppy.

He forces a smile.

DAVID
You want to come in?

The parent hesitates. Studies him.

PARENT
I was just dropping her off.

Gabby's friend slips past David quietly, avoiding eye contact — like she can *feel* the tension clinging to him.

Gabby bursts out of her room.

Her mask snaps on instantly.

GABBY
Oh my god, hi!

She grabs her friend's hand, laughing too loud, pulling her down the hall.

The front door closes.

David exhales.

INT. HALLWAY — MOMENTS LATER

David stands outside Victoria’s bedroom.

The hallway feels longer now.

Victoria’s crouched on the side of the bed, pills in hand. Shes hallow inside

She sees David's **shadow** under the door.

She shoves them under the bed

Then bolts up

David raises his hand to knock.

Stops.

Lowers it.

Fear creeps in — not of her anger, but her silence.

Before he can decide…

The door opens.

Victoria steps out.

She walks past him without looking — like he doesn’t exist.

David reacts on instinct, his arm shooting out, blocking her path.

He doesn’t touch her.

Just stops her.

DAVID
(soft, breaking)
For her…?

She doesn’t respond.

Victoria finally lifts her head — just an inch.

Enough to show she’s still there.

DAVID
We’ll…
we’ll have breakfast.
Later.

A pause.

Victoria looks at him.

Really looks.

Something fragile passes between them — not forgiveness, not healing — but recognition.

Two people still trying to survive the same wreck.

She steps around his arm.

But this time… slower.

And David lets her go.

SCENE: CAR RIDE – EVENING

The car moves through town, windows down, summer air rushing in.
The inside of the car is **alive**—overlapping laughter, childish chaos, voices tripping over each other.

Gabby is halfway turned in her seat, animated. Her friend is practically bouncing as she talks, hands moving wildly.

GABBY'S FRIEND

Okay okay—so we're on the playground, right? And it's after lunch, so the swings are *all sticky* 'cause someone spilled juice, and I sit down anyway—

GABBY

You *knew* it was sticky!

GABBY'S FRIEND

—I didn't think it was gonna be **that** sticky! Like, my shorts made that noise when I stood up.
(she makes an exaggerated ripping sound)
And then Tyler starts yelling, "Ew! You're glued!" and everyone's staring, and Mrs. Kline is blowing her whistle like—

She imitates the shrill whistle, badly. Gabby cracks up.
Victoria laughs too—surprised by it. A real laugh. It slips out before she can stop it.

David smiles, a quiet huff of amusement through his nose.

But his eyes don't leave the road.

The laughter continues, but David's jaw tightens just slightly. His grip on the wheel firms.
He's somewhere else.

Victoria notices.

Her smile lingers a beat too long, then fades. She looks out the window. The streetlights blur by.
A familiar, heavy guilt settles in her chest.

She doesn't say anything.

GABBY'S FRIEND

—and then I tried to wipe it off with sand 'cause that's what you do, but it just made it worse, and my mom thought I—

She suddenly leans forward, pointing excitedly out the windshield.

GABBY'S FRIEND (CONT'D)

LOOK! They're making a *fifth* **Hurrican Street**!

Victoria turns her head—

—and the world **drops out**.

The laughter muffles. The sound drains like water going down a sink.

They pass a theater marquee glowing against the dark.
Huge posters plaster the walls.

A man in a **dirty yellow rabbit suit**.
Purple vest. Crude stitching like scars.
A grin too wide to be human.
A chainsaw held like a joke.

Victoria's breath catches.

Her hands begin to shake in her lap. Small at first. Then worse.

Her eyes don't blink.

Flashes—not images, not quite memories.
Noise.

Dark.
A scream that never finishes.

David glances over—sees her hands.

His expression changes immediately.

Gabby notices too, her smile faltering as she looks between them.

Unaware, Gabby's friend keeps talking, voice echoing faintly in Victoria's ears.

GABBY'S FRIEND

My cousin said there's this part where he grabs the girl and just—
(she laughs, miming it)
—snaps her arm and you see the bone, and then he—

Gabby elbows her hard.

GABBY

Stop.

The car goes quiet.

Gabby's friend freezes, realization dawning. Her voice drops.

GABBY'S FRIEND

Oh—
I'm—
I'm sorry, Ms. Lennard. I forgot you were—

Victoria swallows. Forces air into her lungs.

VICTORIA

No—no. It's not that.

She tries to smile. It doesn't work.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It's just…
(a beat)
It's really sick. You know?

Taking something real—something that actually hurt people—and turning it into…
(she gestures vaguely)
popcorn scares. Like it's just some joke.

Her words begin to tangle.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

There's no—there's no care. No—
They don't even try to understand what they're showing. It's just loud. And cheap. And—

She stops. Her throat tightens.

Gabby's friend looks genuinely worried now.

GABBY'S FRIEND

Are you okay?

Before Victoria can answer—

David reaches over and takes her hand.

Firm. Grounding.

Victoria turns sharply to him.

David doesn't look back. His eyes stay on the road.
But his thumb presses into her knuckles—steady. Intentional.

The car keeps moving.

CUT TO: JEFF'S PIZZA – PARKING LOT

The car pulls in.
The spell breaks.

Other kids rush over, laughter erupting again. Doors open. Noise floods back in.

Gabby hops out, instantly absorbed—friends calling her name, overlapping hellos.

Victoria moves to open her door—

DAVID

Hey.

She pauses.

He finally looks at her now. Gentle. Careful.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I love you.
Would you… for a second?

Victoria nods.

She closes the door.

The sounds of children laughing echo outside—muffled, distant—as the car idles.

And something **unspoken** lingers between them.

Victoria closes the car door.

The sound is too loud in the quiet.

Dave looks at her, but victorias eyes are locked forward, not a look of hate, but of care. The windshield reflects two people sitting inches apart yet,... parts of them are miles away.

Time stretches.

Dave breathes in. holds it

Then finally exhales.

Hes ready.

DAVE
(quiet, careful)
If I really thought you were a psycho bitch
I wouldn't have stayed.

Victoria's shoulders loosen.

DAVE
I wouldn't have raised a family with you.

Silence again.

Dave breaths.

DAVE
Twenty years.

Victoria answers instantly, without thinking.

VICTORIA
Twenty-one.

A chuckle escapes them both. Nothing deep, just… a feeling of relief.

A ghost of a smile passes between them.

Not happy. Just… familiar.

The silence returns — but softer now.

DAVE
The idea of leaving you…
(pauses)
Leaving us—

He shakes his head.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Never.
Not once.
Not when things were good
Not when they were unbearable.

Victoria's fingers curl into her sleeve.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Walking away…
(shakes his head)
never an option.

For the first time, Victoria risks a glance at him.

Victoria finally turns, just slightly.

For a moment — *hope* sneaks in.

Dave meets her eyes.

His voice breaks before he wants it to.

DAVE (CONT'D)
The woman I married is still the woman I love.
More than anything.

That lands. Victoria feels something in her heart

DAVE
I love you…
(pauses)
More then anything

Victoria nods, slow. Careful. Like the world might crack if she moves too fast.

Hope flickers.

Then—

Dave turns to her.

Not angry. Not cruel.

Resolved.

Dave's jaw tightens.

Because now comes the part that kills him.

DAVE
That's why I'm doing this.

Victoria doesn't register the words at first.

VICTORIA
…Doing what?

Dave's voice breaks — just a little.

Dave closes his eyes.

When he opens them — they're ruined.

DAVE
You think I don't notice?

Victoria doesn't move.

DAVE (CONT'D)
You think I don't smell it on you when you sit next to me?

Victoria stiffens. Her hand curls into a fist.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Vodka in the morning.
Mints to cover it.
Pills you swear are "just to sleep."

She clenches her jaw harder.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Every morning you look like you never made it to bed.
Every night your eyes look like there almost bleeding.

She feels exposed,

DAVE
You keep saying it's under control.
You say it's the last time.

He's opening up wounds she left hidden.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Then you say it was just a slip.
Then a bad night.
Then… One drink. One pill.

Victoria turns toward him now — sharp, defensive.

VICTORIA
I Am Well Aware Da-

David Slips

DAVE
Last Tuesday I found you passed out on the side of the road!!!

That lands like a punch.

Victoria's breath catches.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Bottle tipped over.
Prescription in your pocket that isn't yours.
Cars driving past you.

Silence. Thick. Suffocating.

Victoria looks away — exposed now. Enraged

Breathing sharp now.

She Clenches her teeth

Her voice cracks into anger.

VICTORIA
(Sharp, Pissed)
What part of *well talk at therapy* do you not Fucking understand?!

The words echo. Loud. Violent.

Dave recoils — not physically, but emotionally.

A long silence. The car feels smaller.

Then

DAVE
I cancelled it.

Victoria turns slowly.

VICTORIA
…What?

DAVE
I told them we wouldn't be coming back.

That hits harder than a slap.

Her breath quickens.

VICTORIA
After everything you said—
you do *this*?

Dave finally breaks.

Tears slide down his face — silent, ashamed.

DAVE
Because nothing else works.

Victoria laughs — bitter, ugly.

VICTORIA
Then tell me.
Tell me truly
what the Fuck Do You Think Will!

Dave has no answer.

Silence.

Then—

.**DAVE**
You're angry all the time.

Victoria swallows.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Not at me.
Not at work.
At the world.

Victoria's chest tightens.

VICTORIA
…dont start.

DAVE
Gabby hardly ever gets to spend time with you.
Her grades are slipping.
And im constantly getting calls, asking if everything's okay at home.

Victoria flinches like she's been stabbed.

VICTORIA
Don't talk about her, you bitch.

That hits like a bullet, but dave endures

Dave's voice escalates

DAVE (CONT'D)
Your pain isn't staying hidden inside you anymore.
It's spilling into her room.
Into her mind

Her breathing spirals.

DAVE (CONT'D)
And what scares me the most—

She snaps.

DAVE
Gabby doesn't act like a kid anymore.

Victoria lunges toward him with her words.

She explodes

VICTORIA
SHUT THE FU—

Dave explodes — not angry, terrified.

DAVE
YOU NEED HELP!

The words slam into the car.

Silence.

Total. Devastating.

Victoria freezes — like a child caught doing something unforgivable.

Dave breaks down, breath hitching.

They don't look at each other.

The damage is done.

Dave's voice drops. Careful. Afraid.

DAVE
What happened to you back then—
whatever *he* did—

Victoria's eyes burn. Her jaw locks.

DAVE (CONT'D)
If you keep running from it…
it won't stop with you.

A beat.

DAVE (CONT'D)
It'll reach her.

That's the blade.

Victoria turns away, shaking — like she's trying to outrun a memory.

A long silence.

Then, barely—

VICTORIA
What did you do.

Not angry.
Terrified.

Dave exhales, like he's stepping off a ledge.

DAVE
What we were too scared to do before.

She turns back slowly. Tears on her face, but her eyes are empty now.

VICTORIA
Say it.

Dave hesitates.

This isn't about courage anymore.

DAVE
We talked to someone.

Victoria's breathing stops.

DAVE (CONT'D)
A place.

Her fingers dig into her sleeve — grounding, desperate.

DAVE (CONT'D)
They said this time would be… structured.

That's when it hits her.

The fluorescent lights.
The locked doors.
The silence that swallowed screams.

DAVE (CONT'D)
We're sending you back.

The word *rehab* never needs to be said — but it is.

DAVE (CONT'D)
To rehab.

The world drops out.

Victoria doesn't react. Not yet.

Her ears ring. Her vision blurs.

She whispers —

VICTORIA
…No.

Dave leans in, urgent now.

DAVE
I won't let them do what they did before.
I swear.

Nothing.

DAVE (CONT'D)
I'll be there. Every week.
You won't be alone in that place.

That word.

Place.

Victoria's face hardens. Something ancient and feral surfaces.

VICTORIA
It's not the place.

Dave frowns, confused.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
It's what happens when I'm sober.

She opens her eyes — raw, exposed.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
When there's nothing between me and it.

Dave's breath catches.

DAVE
Vic—

VICTORIA
I don't drink to get high.
I drink so I don't remember.

Silence.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I don't use because I'm weak.
I use because if I don't…
I see him.

Dave's eyes fill with tears.

DAVE
I just want you alive.

Victoria nods.

VICTORIA
Then don't make me face it yet.

Beat.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Because I would rather lose you.
Lose Gabby.
Lose everything—

Her voice cracks.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
—than sit in a room
and let the past touch me again.

DAVE
Please… don't do this.

Victoria shakes her head.

VICTORIA
If you send me there…
we're done.

A beat.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I won't survive both.

Silence.

Then — finality.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I'm taking my bags.

Dave panics.

DAVE
Victoria— don't—

She opens the door.

Cold air rushes in.

She stops once more.

VICTORIA
I hate you.

Not screamed.
Confessed.

She looks back — eyes empty, resolute.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
And if you try to stop me…
you'll never see Gabby again.

She gets out.

The door SLAMS.

Dave is left alone in the car.

Not abandoned — *left behind*.

Silence.

INT. FAMILY RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Victoria **bursts** from the car.

The door slams behind her harder than necessary.

Dave starts to say her name.

He doesn't finish.

Victoria is already moving — fast, uneven, like she's chasing something that's running ahead of her.

Across the parking lot.

Her jaw is locked. Her breath is sharp through her nose.

At the entrance, an OFFICER raises a hand — not aggressive, just instinct.

Victoria shoves her badge inches from his face.

Doesn't slow down.

The doors swing open.

INSIDE — CHAOS

Noise.

Laughter. Music. Children shouting over each other. Paper hats. Balloons.

Victoria steps in —

And for half a second, she doesn't register at all.

Then one parent looks up.

Then another.

A chair scrapes.

The noise **thins**.

Not stops.
Thins.

Whispers ripple outward like a dropped glass.

Victoria feels it before she sees it.

That sensation —
like being *recognized without being named*.

She lowers her head slightly. Keeps walking.

The whispers follow.

Not loud. Careful.

A mother leans close to another.

A father stares too long, then looks away.

Someone mutters:

PARENT (O.S.)
…No way.

PARENT (O.S.)
…she's older than I thought.

ANOTHER (O.S.)
I heard she never left town.

ANOTHER (O.S.)
You don't forget a face like that.

PARENT (O.S.)
I thought she moved after… everything.

PARENT (O.S.)
Some people don't.

A child laughs — too loud — and the adults **don't**.

Kids notice something's wrong but don't know what.

The room holds its breath.

Victoria doesn't look up.

But she *feels* their eyes on her back.

Like hands.

GABBY

Across the room.

Sitting at a long table. Cake untouched.

Her friends tap her shoulder.

Point.

Gabby turns.

Her face **lights up**.

Relief. Excitement.

She stands.

GABBY
Mom!

Victoria locks eyes with her.

And keeps walking.

Fast. Heavy steps.

Gabby's smile falters — just a crack.

AT THE TABLE

Victoria stops.

Stares down at her.

GABBY
Where were you?

No pause.

VICTORIA
We're leaving.

GABBY
What?

Victoria grabs her wrist.

Cold. Final.

GABBY
Mom— stop—

Victoria turns toward the exit.

Gabby resists.

Just a little.

GABBY
It's my birthday.

Victoria stops.

Slow turn.

Her eyes are empty.

VICTORIA
Not anymore.

That one lands wrong.

Gabby's voice cracks.

GABBY
You promised.

Victoria leans in.

Low. Sharp.

VICTORIA
I lied.

Gabby freezes.

Tears well instantly.

VICTORIA
Now are you gonna bitch here and cry,
or am i gonna have to drag your ass out of here

Chairs scrape.

Adults stand.

THE ROOM CLOSES IN

PARENT #1
Hey.
Easy.

Victoria doesn't look.

VICTORIA
Back up.

PARENT #2
You're hurting her.

Victoria laughs once.

Dry.

VICTORIA
You have no idea what hurt looks like.

Another parent steps closer.

PARENT #3
Is she drunk?

A murmur spreads.

Victoria's jaw tightens.

VICTORIA
Say it louder.

They don't.

They block the exit instead.

Not aggressive.

Concerned.

That’s worse.

PARENT #1
Let go of her.

Victoria tightens her grip.

Gabby sobs now.

Silent. Shaking.

VICTORIA
She’s mine.

PARENT #2
Not like this.

That’s it.

Victoria snaps her head up.

Eyes blazing.

VICTORIA
You don’t get to judge me
from a birthday table.

She steps forward.

They don’t move.

VICTORIA
You sit in safe rooms
and pretend monsters have no hearts.

Her breathing speeds up.

Sound dulls.

VICTORIA
They don’t.

Hands touch her arm.

Another reaches for Gabby.

Victoria shoves someone hard.

A chair crashes.

A glass shatters.

Kids scream.

PARENT (O.S.)
Call the cops!

Victoria spins.

VICTORIA
I *am* the cops!

She's shaking now.

Sweat beads.

Walls feel closer.

Voices pile on.

PARENT #3
She's unstable!

PARENT #1
Put the kid down!

Victoria's vision tunnels.

Ringing.

Someone grabs her from behind.

Panic detonates.

Pure. Animal.

She reaches for her coat

She draws out something from her pocket…

Service Weapon.

The room SCREAMS.

VICTORIA
DON’T FUCKING TOUCH ME.

Someone lunges.

A body slams into her shoulder—

—

BANG.

Time stops.

A body hits the floor.

Silence so sharp it hurts.

Smoke curls from the barrel.

Gabby stares at her.

Terrified.

Victoria looks down at the gun.

Then at Gabby.

For half a second —

The mask cracks.

Then—

CUT TO BLACK.

1. If i really thought you were a psycho bicth i would not have stuck with you all this time
2. How long have we been married for, 20 years?. Vics *chuckle*. Never once has the thought of divorcing you.
3. Vic says “thanks”. David: But i love you too much to let you live in survival mode.
4. Vic caught off gaurd
5. The easiest thing to do, is state the obvious and leave you to fix your self, but im not the easiest person
6. Dave what are you trying to say
7. Im saying you need help, cause sitting her and just trying to sigh the days away is killing us and its killing you.
8. Vic: we can talk about this in therapy
9. i cancelled therapy, for both us, we wont be needing it
10. Vic?: why. Dave: it’s not working
11. Vic: wdym its not working?
12. I can smell it in your breath, everynight, i have to pick you up from the side of the road. Sometime i wonder if your not dead in the back seat. And then you wake up, and it repeats
13. David says they cant keep carrying on like this. “What ever happened in the past, they need to…”
14. I dont want there to be a night where we wake up and find you dead
15. Ive had to drag you off the streets because of how drunk you were.
16. Vic gets mad, and snaps out at mike, saying that reminding her of how bad things have gotten is not gonne help anything
17. Vic says: no cant go there. I just cant, i wount last a day there
18. Vic says: your throwing me under the bus dave, no i make sure our family dosent become road kill.
19. Ur angry and bitter all the time, and the scariest thing is gabby is slowly starting to act like you, im not saying this to judge you, ot to tell you to get your ducks in line, i want to do this with you. If you let me
20. David… what did you do?
21. You need rehab
22. *shock*
23. You will not be alone, i will visit you every week, and be with you every hour i can, ill do theropy sessions with you, you will not be alone
24. Vic: “if you really loved me you would not do this”

25. If i didn’t do this then i would’nt be caring for you.
26. Something has to change vic

.